

Mock Jury Trial for Social Studies Students

By connecting with the Maryland Judiciary website, www.courts.state.md.us/mocktrial, you can download all the materials necessary to conduct a 1-2 day mock criminal jury trial in your classroom. For high school students, a mock trial affords a look inside a courtroom and a better understanding of how our justice system operates.

The names and circumstances of *State of Maryland v. Chris Smith* are made up, but the issues are real, the problems facing the jury are realistic, and the trial has been reviewed by a judge to ensure that it accurately portrays what happens in a courtroom.

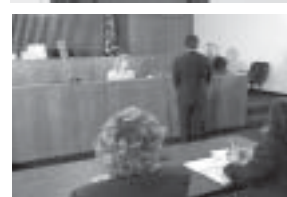
The trial provides roles both large and small for 17-35 students. In addition to teaching what happens during a trial, it should provide plenty of discussion topics about the law, the legal system and the constitutional rights of individuals. Most important, it allows students to confront the same kinds of decisions that citizens face when they serve on juries; weighing facts and arguments and trying to make the right decision about the guilt or innocence of a defendant.

An important note: The "crime" that occurred in *State v. Smith* is obviously not a real one. This was a conscious choice made to enable students to concentrate on the legal process.

www.courts.state.md.us/mocktrial

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For more
information,
please contact the
Court Information
Office at
410/260-1488



State of Maryland v. Chris Smith



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materials available at
[www.courts.state.md.us/
mocktrial](http://www.courts.state.md.us/mocktrial)

Created by the Court Information Office

Online Materials Include:

- ☑ Easy to follow instructions
- ☑ Script for a 30 min. trial
- ☑ Courtroom layout for the classroom
- ☑ Printable sheets to be used as 'evidence' in the case
- ☑ Legal definitions
- ☑ Juror instructions
- ☑ Description for each player
- ☑ Discussion topics

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State of Maryland v. Chris Smith

Last month, 18-year-old Chris Smith was taken into custody by Maryland State Police, and charged with felony possession of drugs. The degree of violation depends on how the drugs were used, i.e. for personal use or for distribution, and the amount that was confiscated. In this case, the State Police charged Mr./Ms. Smith, the defendant, with possessing a pound or more of drugs, which is considered a felony and a jailable offense.

The case is being heard in the county where the charge was brought. Because this is a felony case, the trial will be held in a circuit court. At the pre-trial hearing, the defense attorney for Mr./Ms. Smith, Lee Marshall, notified the judge that his/her client has requested a jury trial. This is the trial that is to occur today.

